



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information Update for Businesses and Workplaces

As of March 4, 2020

What We Know

This is an emerging and rapidly evolving situation. An outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has spread throughout China and to most other countries and territories, including the United States. The virus is spread through respiratory droplets an infected person expels when coughing, sneezing, or talking, and the time between exposure to the virus and symptom onset is 2-14 days. Symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Reported illnesses have ranged from mild to severe and some have resulted in death. There have been several deaths in the United States, notably in Washington state. Community spread is being detected in a growing number of countries. There is no FDA approved vaccine or treatment for COVID-19 and focus is on alleviation of symptoms. **Currently, Colorado does not have any cases and risk is low for Coloradoans. Risk is based on exposure.**

Workplaces may help prevent exposures to acute respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, in non-healthcare settings by following interim guidance provided by the CDC. The guidance also provides planning considerations if there are more widespread, community outbreaks of COVID-19, including creating an Infectious Disease Outbreak Response Plan. The most up-to-date and detailed guidance can be found here [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to COVID-19](#).

- **Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:**
 - Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants).
 - Ensure that your sick leave policies are flexible and employees are aware of the policies.
 - Do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.
 - Employers should maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member.
- **Separate sick employees:**
 - The CDC recommends that employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be separated from other employees and be sent home immediately. Sick employees should cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available).
- **Emphasize staying home when sick, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees:**
 - Place posters that encourage [staying home when sick](#), [cough and sneeze etiquette](#), and [hand hygiene](#) at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
 - Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees.

- Instruct employees to clean their hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol, or, wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.
- Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand rubs in the workplace. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained.
- **Perform routine environmental cleaning:**
 - Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs.
 - No additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is recommended at this time.
 - Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) can be wiped down by employees before each use.
- **Advise employees before traveling to take certain steps:**
 - Check the [CDC's Traveler's Health Notices](#) for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country to which you will travel. Specific travel information for travelers going to and returning from China, and information for aircrew, can be found at on the [CDC website](#).
- **Consider creating an Infectious Disease Outbreak Response Plan**
 - Ensure the plan is flexible and involve your employees in developing and reviewing your plan.
 - Conduct a focused discussion or exercise using your plan, to find out ahead of time whether the plan has gaps or problems that need to be corrected.
 - Share your plan with employees and explain what human resources policies, workplace and leave flexibilities, and pay and benefits will be available to them.
 - Share best practices with other businesses in your communities (especially those in your supply chain), chambers of commerce, and associations to improve community response efforts.

All employers need to consider how best to decrease the spread of acute respiratory illness and lower the impact of COVID-19 in their workplace in the event of an outbreak in the US. They should identify and communicate their objectives, which may include one or more of the following: (a) reducing transmission among staff, (b) protecting people who are at higher risk for adverse health complications, (c) maintaining business operations, and (d) minimizing adverse effects on other entities in their supply chains.

Additional resources

- [EPA approved COVID-19 disinfectants](#)
- [What You Need to Know About COVID-19 Factsheet](#)
- [Weld County Health Department COVID-19](#)

For more information

For general questions about COVID-19 in Colorado, call CO HELP at 303-389-1687 or 1-877-462-2911 or email at COHELP@RMPDC.org;

For organizational preparedness, please call the Weld County Health Department at 970-400-2111; Visit the WCDPHE website at www.weldhealth.org